

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of simulating communication delays among parties at simulated
2 spatial positions, comprising the steps of:

3 (a) receiving a message from a transmitting party, the message indicating a destination
4 party to whom the message is destined;

5 (b) determining a virtual distance from the transmitting party to the destination party;

6 (c) storing the message for a time interval determined according to the determined virtual
7 distance from the transmitting party to the destination party at a predetermined transmission
8 speed; and then

9 (d) forwarding the received message to the destination party.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) is performed according to actual
2 terrestrial positions of the parties; and

3 the predetermined transmission speed is substantially less than the speed of light.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) is performed according to
2 simulated positions of the parties in a virtual spatial map.

1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein step (a) includes checking said message
2 and rejecting said message if it contains any information indicating true identity of the transmitting
3 party.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein step (c) is bypassed if the transmitting
2 party agrees to pay a premium.

1 6. The method of claim 5 wherein the premium is monetary.

1 7. The method of claim 5 wherein the parties are engaged in a recreation and
2 the premium is a recreation-related penalty.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the parties are engaged in a recreation
2 involving at least virtual buying and selling of goods, and wherein goods obtained from a greater
3 simulated distance incur a greater virtual cost.

1 9. A server for simulating communication delays among parties at simulated
2 spatial positions, comprising:

3 an arithmetic unit for at least determining a simulated distance from each party to each
4 other party;

5 a receiver for receiving a message from a transmitting party;

6 a data store for storing the received message for a time interval determined by the
7 arithmetic unit according to the determined simulated distance from the transmitting party to a
8 destination party and a predetermined transmission speed; and

9 a transmitter for forwarding the received message to the destination party.

1 10. The server of claim 9 wherein:
2 the determination of a simulated distance from each party to each other party is performed
3 according to actual terrestrial positions of the parties; and
4 the predetermined transmission speed is substantially less than the speed of light.

1 11. The server of claim 9 wherein:
2 the determination of a simulated distance from each party to each other party is performed
3 according to simulated positions of the parties in a virtual spatial map.

1 12. The server of claim 9 wherein the receiver checks said message and rejects
2 said message if it contains any information indicating true identity of the transmitting party.

1 13. The server of claim 9 wherein the data store is bypassed if the transmitting
2 party agrees to pay a premium.

1 14. The server of claim 13 wherein the premium is monetary.

1 15. The server of claim 13 wherein the parties are engaged in a recreation and
2 the premium is a recreation-related penalty.

1 16. The server of claim 9 wherein the parties are engaged in a recreation
2 involving at least virtual buying and selling of goods, and wherein goods obtained from a greater
3 simulated distance incur a greater virtual cost.

1 17. A server for equalizing the effects of network connection speeds among
2 parties connected to a network, comprising:

3 a receiver for receiving a message to be sent to each party;

4 an arithmetic unit for at least determining a transmission time for the message for each
5 party according to each party's connection speed; and

6 a transmitter for forwarding a copy of the received message to each party after a time
7 inversely proportional to the transmission time determined for that party.

1 18. The server according to claim 17, wherein said time inversely proportional
2 to the transmission time for each party is computed so that all parties receive messages at
3 substantially the same time.

1 19. A method of equalizing the effects of network connection speeds among
2 parties connected to a network, comprising the steps of:
3 receiving a message to be sent to each party;
4 determining a transmission time for the message for each party according to each party's
5 connection speed; and
6 transmitting a copy of the received message to each party after a time inversely
7 proportional to the transmission time determined for that party.

1 20. The method according to claim 19, including the step of computing said
2 time inversely proportional to the transmission time for each party so that all parties receive
3 messages at substantially the same time.

1 21. A system for terminals to interact in a network recreation environment with
2 other terminals, comprising:
3 means for determining a terminal's location;
4 means for linking a terminal's location to a virtual location of the network recreation;
5 means for transmitting recreation-related messages to said other terminals; and
6 means for adapting delivery time of messages sent from a terminal to another terminal.

1 22. The system according to claim 21, wherein the means for determining a
2 terminal's location comprises means for inputting a name of a proximate city from a
3 predetermined list of cities and means for equating the terminal's location to a terrestrial location
4 of the proximate city.

1 23. The system according to claim 21, wherein the means for determining a
2 terminal's location comprises means for receiving signals from the global positioning system and
3 means for determining the terminal's location accordingly.

1 24. The system according to claim 21, wherein the means for determining a
2 terminal's location comprises means for inputting a postal code and means for equating the
3 terminal's location with the a predetermined terrestrial location associated with the postal code.

1 25. The system according to claim 21, wherein the means for linking a
2 terminal's location to a virtual location is according to the terminal's location and virtual distances
3 pertaining to the network recreation.

1 26. The system according to claim 21, wherein the means for transmitting
2 recreation related messages employs at least one of the Internet, GSM, WAP, EDGE, TETRA,
3 and Bluetooth.

1 27. The system according to claim 21, wherein the means for adapting delivery
2 time is according to the virtual location of a terminal.

1 28. The system according to claim 21, wherein the means for adapting delivery
2 time is according to a connection speed associated with a terminal.

1 29. A system for terminals to interact, comprising:
2 a network for connecting the terminals to one another and to a server for providing
3 interactive content to the terminals,
4 the server comprising:
5 a CPU,
6 an input interface for receiving signals via the network from the terminals
7 and coupling them to the CPU,
8 logic in the CPU for determining interactive content for the terminals
9 responsive to signals received therefrom, and
10 an output interface for forwarding interactive content via the network from
11 the CPU to the terminals.

1 30. The system of claim 29, further comprising a data store coupled to the
2 CPU.

1 31. The system of claim 30, wherein the data store contains at least:
2 identification of terminals currently connected to the server,
3 approximate terrestrial positions of said terminals,
4 actual distances among said terminals determined according to their approximate terrestrial
5 positions,
6 virtual distances among said terminals determined according to the actual distances among
7 them and a distance scale appropriate to a recreation in which said terminals are participating,
8 the transmission speeds at which said terminals are connected to the network, and
9 a queue of messages, each from a source one of said terminals and destined for a
10 destination one of said terminals.

1 32. The system of claim 31, wherein each message remains in the queue for a
2 queuing time determined according to:
3 the virtual distance between its source terminal and its destination terminal, and
4 according to a virtual transmission speed predetermined for a recreation in which said
5 terminals are participating.

1 33. The system of claim 31, wherein each message remains in the queue for a
2 queuing time determined according to:
3 the virtual distance between its source terminal and its destination terminal,
4 a virtual transmission speed predetermined for a recreation in which said terminals are
5 participating, and
6 the transmission speed of the destination terminal so as to equalize the effects of different
7 transmission speeds.